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Message Text

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AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
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SUBJ: GREEKS REACT ENTHUSIASTICALLY TO EC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS DECISION ON GREEK ACCESSION

REF A. ATHENS 1334 B. EC BRUSSELS 1356 C. ATHENS 942

SUMMARY: EC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' AGREEMENT TO GREECE'S ACCESSION APPLICATION HAS MET WITH VERY POSITIVIVE RECEPTION IN ATHENS IN MOST QUARTERS. PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS HAS EXPRESSED "STRONG SATISFACTION" WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT, AND MAIN OPPOSITION PARTY (UNION OF DEMOCRATIC CENTER) HAS ALSO REACTED ENTHUSIASTICALLY, WHILE THOSE OPPOSED TO GREEK ENTRY INTO THE EC HAVE CONDEMNED THE DECISION
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AS BLACKMAIL. IN THEIR REMARKS, CARAMANLIS AND OTHER

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GOG OFFICIALS HAVE BEGUN AN EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN
AGAINST UNDUE EXPECTATIONS, AND ACKNOWLEDGED
THE PROBLEMS THAT LIE AHEAD IN RESTRUCTURING THE
ECONOMY AND ADAPTING TO THE STRESSES OF INTEGRATION
WITH MORE DEVELOPED NATIONS, BUT THEIR REMARKS
REFLECTED OPTIMISM THAT GREECE WOULD BE ABLE TO RISE
TO THE CHALLENGE. IN SUM, FOLLOWING HIS STRONG
REACTION TO THE DISAPPOINTING REPORT OF THE
EC COMMISSION (REFTEL C), CARAMANLIS WOULD APPEAR TO
HAVE COME OUT AHEAD ... THE WESTERN EUROPEAN LEADERS
HAVE ONCE AGAIN ENDORSED HIM AND HIS PLAN FOR STRONGER
LINKS TO WESTERN EUROPE. END SUMMARY.

1. IN A PUBLIC STATEMENT FEBRUARY 10, GREEK PRIME
MINISTER CARAMANLIS EXPRESSED HIS "STRONG SATISFACTION"
OVER THE FEBRUARY 9 DECISION OF THE EC COUNCIL OF
MINISTERS ON GREECE'S ACCESSION TO THE COMMUNITY. HE
STATED THAT THE DECISION, WHICH HE TERMED "OF
HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE", MEANS THAT GREECE WILL BE-
COME A FULL AND EQUAL MEMBER OF THE GROUP OF DEVELOPED
EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, AN INTEGRATION WHICH OFFERS A SAFE-
GUARD FOR GREEK DEMOCRACY AND AN IMPROVED GREEK
STANDARD OF LIVING. CARAMANLIS STRESSED HIS APPRECIATION
TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE EC MEMBER STATES, AND EVEN
HAD KIND WORDS FOR THE EC COMMISSION, WHOSE RECOMMENDATION
TO THE COUNCIL AROUSED SUCH AN OUTCRY HERE ONLY
TWO WEEKS AGO (REF C). THE STATEMENT ALSO NOTED THAT
THE ROAD TO INTEGRATION "WILL BE NEITHER SHORT NOR
EASY", GIVERN THE SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL
PROBLEMS WHICH EXIST. (SEE REF A FOR FULL TEXT OF
CARAMANLIS' REMARKS).

2. COORDINATION MINISTER PAPALIGOURAS EXPANDED ON
CARAMANLIS' THEME IN A TELEVISION PRESENTATION IN WHICH
HE EXPLAINED, IN SIMPLE TERMS AIMED AT THE AVERAGE
CITIZEN, THE BACKGROUND TO AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE COUNCIL
DECISION. HE INDICATED THAT THE GOG IS LOOKING
FORWARD "WITH CONFIDENCE" TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF NEGO-
TIATIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY, BUT CAUTIONED THAT (1) A
SERIES OF ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL PROBLEMS RELATING
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TO ACCESSION REMAIN TO BE SOLVED; AND THAT (2) AD-
MISSION WILL NOT AUTOMATICALLY SOLVE ALL GREECE'S
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS, BUT RATHER THAT A
STRONG NATIONAL EFFORT WILL BE REQUIRED TO RESTRUCTURE
THE ECONOMY AND TO ADAPT TO EUROPEAN CONDITIONS.

3. REACTION OF THE OPPOSITION PARTIES: UNION
OF THE DEMOCRATIC CENTER (EDHK) PARTY LEADER GEORGE

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MAVROS ALSO EXPRESSED SATISFACTION AT THE EC COUNCIL'S DECISION, AND INDICATED HIS HOPE THAT ADMISSION WOULD TAKE PLACE BY 1978 SO GREECE COULD BE REPRESENTED IN THE FIRST EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT WITH DIRECT ELECTIONS. ANDREAS PAPANDREOU, LEADER OF THE PANHELLENIC SOCIALIST MOVEMENT (PASOK) TERMED THE EC COUNCIL DECISION AN EFFORT TO "SAVE THE PRESTIGE OF THE GREEK GOVERNMENT" WITHOUT DEVIATING FROM THE COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS. AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED THE COMMUNIST PARTY (EXTERIOR) SEIZED THE OCCASION TO ATTACK THE COMMUNITY, NATO AND GREEK ACCESSION, WHILE THE KKE (INTERIOR) WARNED THAT GREECE SHOULD NOT BE LULLED INTO BELIEVING THAT ACCESSION PROVIDES SOLUTIONS TO THE MAJOR PROBLEMS OF THE COUNTRY.

4. BUSINESS: THE FEDERATION OF GREEK INDUSTRIES AND THE ATHENS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, TWO OF THE MOST IMPORTANT BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS IN GREECE, BOTH HAILED THE DECISION.

5. PRESS REACTIONS: THE FAVORABLE DECISION BY THE EC MINISTERS HAS BEEN THE LEAD STORY IN THE GREEK MEDIA DURING THE PAST TWO DAYS. AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED, THOSE FAVORING GREEK ENTRY WERE MOST VOCAL IN PRAISING THE DECISION AND LAUDING CARAMANLIS' FIRM ACTION IN BRINGING IT ABOUT.

6. CONSERVATIVE VRADYNI'S EDITORIAL ENTITLED "NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT" DESCRIBED THE GREAT SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GREEK VICTORY WHICH WAS DUE TO THE IMMENSE RESPECT WHICH CARMANLIS ENJOYS IN EUROPE. PRO-GOVERNMENT ACROPOLIS' HEADED ITS EDITORIAL "THE GREAT SUCCESS", COMMENDING THE PRIME MINISTER'S EFFORTS. MONARCHIST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ETHINIKOS KIRIX EXPRESSED SIMILAR VIEWS, ADDING THAT THE DECISION WAS "A SLAP IN THE FACE OF TURKEY." LESS TRIUMPHANT, BUT STILL ENTHUSIASTIC APPLAUSE WAS HEARD FROM INDEPENDENT KATHIMERINI WHICH PLAYED THE STORY FAVORABLY BUT NOTED "NOW IT IS HIGH TIME FOR ALL TO SET TO WORK". LIBERAL, OPPOSITION TO VIMA ALSO GAVE THE TOPIC EXTENSIVE COVERAGE, WHILE ITS AFTERNOON SISTER TA NEA SPOKE ADDITIONALLY "OF THE DIFFICULTIES TO BE ENCOUNTERED" IN THE FORTHCOMING NEGOTIATION PROCESS. RIGHTWING ELEFTHEROS COSMOS BANNERED "NEITHER SHORT NOR EASY WILL BE THE ROAD TOWARDS THE EEC", WHILE LEFT-OF-CENTER ELEFTHEROTYPIA ALSO UNDERLINED THE DIFFICULTIES TO COME IN THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR ENTRY. PRO-PASOK ATHINAIKI EDITORIALIZED THAT THE GOG HAS BEEN PLAYING THE SAME EC SONG FOR MORE THAN EIGHTEEN MONTHS,

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AND THAT IT IS TIME TO SOLVE GREECE'S PROBLEMS AND THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BUCKLE DOWN TO WORK NOW. COMMUNIST (KKE-EXTERIOR) RIZOSPASTIS CLAIMED THAT THE OUTCOME WAS DETERMINED "TO COVER BLACKMAILING AND PRESSURES WHICH HAD BEEN EXERCISED UPON GREECE", AND ATTACKED THE GOVERNMENT FOR CREATING FALSE IMPRESSIONS. IT ALSO NOTED THE EC WILL PRESENT GREECE WITH STILL ADDITIONAL DIFFICULTIES. FINALLY, ULTRA-CONSERVATIVE ESTIA LOOKED DUBIOUSLY AT THE MATTER, ASKING FOR A FULL ACCOUNTING FROM THE GOG OF JUST WHAT CONCESSIONS HAVE BEEN EXTRACTED FROM GREECE AS THE PRICE OF ADMISSION.
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